



The Avenue Project Task Force

Wednesday, December 21, 2005

6:00pm-8:00pm

Paul McLaughlin Youth Center

1135 Dorchester Avenue

Meeting Notes

Attendance:

Task Force Members: Marissa Coleman, Edward Crowley, Sean Dennison, Eileen Fenton, Rosanne Foley, Jane Howard, Arlene Lopes, Anne Riley, Nhan Paul Ton That.

Inés Soto-BRA, Ralph DeNisco-BTD, Mary Knasas-DND, John Dalzell-BRA, James Fitzgerald-BRA.

I. Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting was called to order by the Dorchester Avenue Project Manager Inés Soto
- Inés went through the agenda for the meeting and noted changes regarding the process of the meeting; the updates and presentations by the staff were to be made before the mission statement activity

II. Review and Approval of Notes

- Notes from the Community Meeting (November 16th, 2005) were approved after correction of some mistakes in names on page 3.
- Inès pointed out that since materials were sent out to the Task Force through the mail, we would not bring so many extra copies at meetings from now on.

III. Dorchester Zoning Overview

- James Fitzgerald gave a presentation on the Dorchester Avenue zoning issues.
- He passed around zoning maps (presenting the North and South sides of the avenue) and fact sheets (on the history of the avenue).
- He went over Article 52 (ref. handout): history and zoning overview of the avenue, as well as the next steps and objectives.

IV. Updates

Business Trend Analysis:

- Mary Knasas (DND) gave a review and update of the business trend analysis. She passed out a map of the avenue with the different businesses that were surveyed, as well as a sample survey form.
- Mary explained what the surveyors did on the field: register businesses on the survey form, and add comments on what needs to be improved (e.g. graffiti removal). She added that there are approximately 150 businesses that were surveyed, and 80% of the data has already been entered in the database

- A draft report of the business trend analysis is expected to be out by the end of January.
- Mary and Inès discussed the benefits of the business trend analysis, putting emphasis on the fact that it has allowed the staff to go out on the avenue and have an idea of what should be done about it, and bring suggestions. Also, the business trend analysis will be a good tool for future uses, and to track the changes that will occur on the avenue over time.
- The last step before putting the final analysis out will be to go back to certain business for clarification purposes, on their addresses particularly. The survey did not only cover Dot Ave., and this brought some confusion about the real addresses of businesses at corners of Dot. Ave and other streets.

- **Youth Summit:**
- Inès gave a summary of the youth summit. She talked about the good turnout (about fifty young people).
- She then gave an update on the mayor's nominations: the two young ladies who have been nominated to represent to youth (Kimberly Smith and Anita Marshall), will have a lunch with the staff in January, to welcome them, and see if they need any training.
- Inès gave a summary of the youth comments, and thanked all the people who participated in the summit.

- **Task Force Members:**
- Inès mentioned that Kenny needs to be contacted in order to ask him if his business activities would still be a problem, since they seem to be on the way of his dedication to the Task Force.
- Paul Ton Than talked about the change of Executive Director of Viet Aid. He said that he would retire, and thanked everyone for the opportunity that was given to him to work with them.

- **Request For Proposal:**
- Inès talked about the idea of bringing on board a consultant (with separate budget), to help in the decision-making concerning the allocation of the \$5 million.
- Ralph mentioned that we would focus on a complete redesign of three main areas: Fields Corner, Lower Mills, and Freeport St. The task of the consultants will therefore be to help in what the staff finds difficulties.
- John (Urban Design), mentioned that there are three main aspects to look at when considering the improvement of Dot. Ave. First, we need to come up with standards that will guide future infrastructure improvements. We have to establish a character for the whole avenue, and at the same time create aspects unique to specific areas. Then, we need to consider the commercial district, and set guidelines and identify specific improvements to be made (building facades etc.). The third aspect is the commercial

district development and planning. Basically, we need to define focus areas, and find out how best to develop them. one idea would be to look at the work already done be St. Mark's Main Streets and continue in the same direction. This also requires an effective management of planning resources.

- Inès noted that it would be ideal to have a consultant by March.
- Ed asked what kind of firms would be considered. Ralph answered, that it would be a partnership of several consulting firms.
- Ed pointed out that the team should make it a priority to try and achieve some short term goals, in order to have something concrete to report to the community. In this way, people will know that the project is moving forward. Ralph noted that although the project is a long-term one, certain parts of it will probably be achieved short-term. All of the improvements will not take the same amount of time to be finished. Therefore, there will be concrete reports to the community.

V. Mission Statement

- The mission statement was discussed, with the help of the staff, and ideas from other meetings.
- Jane suggested a line like "...developing a long-term framework for short-term actions."
- It was decided that the mission statement would include Jane's line, plus what was already agreed upon, as well as Roseanne's line
- Ed suggested that Inès e-mailed every member of the Task Force with a draft. Final comments should be e-mailed back to her.
- All members agreed to that suggestion.

VI. Adjourn

- Meeting was adjourned at around 8:05 p.m.